

Remarks

Claims 7-12 remain pending in the above-referenced application and are submitted for the Examiner's reconsideration.

Claims 7-10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,931,699 to Saito ("Saito"). Claim 7 recites a receiving slot in a first connector. Included in this one receiving slot, according to the claim, are the following: (1) a first pressing element that projects into the receiving slot, and (2) at least one second pressing element. According to the claim, a flange from a second connector is engaged with this receiving slot. Thus, in order to meet this arrangement in claim 1, the prior art at the very least must teach one slot that includes both of these pressing elements and that engages a flange. This rules out elements 4, 7, and 20 of Saito because none of these openings receives a flange. Moreover, the openings in Saito that do receive projection wall 18 and locking arm 15, namely space 19 and accommodating cavity 16, also fall short of meeting this claimed arrangement, even if one regards wall 18 and arm 15 as meeting the flange limitation in the claim. With respect to wall 18 in Saito, when sealing portion C and housing B are united, wall 18 is received in space 19. Space 19, however, does not include a pressing element for receiving the end face of wall 18. Therefore, the lack of a second pressing element as recited in claim 7 prevents space 19 from meeting the recited slot. As for locking arm 15, it is received in arm accommodating cavity 16. Cavity 16 does not meet the recited receiving slot because it too does not include a second pressing element. Note how the end face of arm 15, once inserted in cavity 16, faces empty space instead of an element that can be characterized as a pressing element. Therefore, arm 15 cannot be viewed as having its end face received by a second pressing element. Since no single space or cavity in Saito includes both the first and second pressing elements as recited in claim 7, Applicants submit that Saito does not identically teach all of the limitations of claim 7. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 7-10 and 12 is respectfully requested.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito. Because of the above-noted deficiencies noted with respect to Saito, Applicants submit that this claim is patentable for at least the same reasons given above.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious, and useful. Consideration and allowance of the claims are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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